824
283 from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called

324 "arag", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and

293 grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

372 Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

386 Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

● 222 Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

388 Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Hircunia Abyssinica).

824
281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

●222
554

wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Läskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. [164 146] Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magnza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

[278] Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

825
223 Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411
184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmëd") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222
412 A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yäbahër dengay" (river rock). It is used

135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder



pork, bat flesh, meat of wild birds, insects; and repulsive stuffs, such as cow or goat urine and donkey milk.

Gathering, Processing, and Administering. The gathering of herbals for medicinal recipes assumes, first, accurate knowledge of their appearance and location. Many medicinals are exotics whose appearance and even whose names are unknown by most men; many of these must be searched out in distant and barely accessible corners of the highland plateau, others can be found only in the malarial lowlands. From the time an herbal is located until it is processed together with the remaining materia medica, it must be handled in a prescribed fashion. During gathering, while the herbal is being cut or pried from its natural surroundings, there is the danger that its latent curing powers will be lost. For leafy botanicals, particularly takiltila, precautions must be taken against diffusing these powers into the earth through some object simultaneously in contact with the botanical and the ground. Here, a weighted noose may be used. Many prescribed techniques of gathering are only loosely identified as precautionary, since the specific dangers each guards against are unknown. These techniques specify the equipment to be used, the quality of the gatherer, and circumstantial conditions. Thus, if a recipe requires that a branch be severed with a knife, it often adds that the instrument be unused, or made of a single piece of

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder



*278 *222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a virgin boy, in others naked or facing east. [801] Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from each place. [788] Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

*278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

*278 *759 Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhan-
874 iyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt
[593] korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew,
[604] who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occa-
sions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and lo-
• [222] cation. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of
the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves
trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time,
the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various
pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between her-
balists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do
not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the
situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 Classed together with other herbalists is the maker
of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the
778 *[192] herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which
includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sick-
man of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some
of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet
is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened be-
neath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs
a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulner-
able client against a recurrence of the ailment. Cer-
tain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic
amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 [442] The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the students are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce